




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR GAVEN

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

United Australia Party

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—Ind) (11.45 am): I would like to formally announce today that I have joined the United Australia Party, the UAP, and intend to sit in this Parliament now as a UAP member. I have previously stated that, after resigning from the Liberal National Party last November, I would be intending to form and become a member of a party that follows the type of principles the LNP once espoused and focused on representing the joint interests of its members and constituents. The UAP, historically, emerged as a moderate party that uniquely linked former Labor leaders Joe Lyons, Billy Hughes and the long-serving former Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies and many others. It emerged during the World War II years when, like the Campbell Newman Party, it became all about the executive and lobbyists' interests and not about the party members and the public at large. It was conceptually the singular most admirable and pragmatic party ever to emerge in Australia's history. We intend to ensure this history becomes reality again. It is no secret that the principles of the UAP announced last week, whilst excluding lobbyists from the executive, are intending to be inclusive of all those in Australia who want better representatives and a party through which they can be represented fully.

It would seem that the emergence of the UAP, which has occurred organically over the last year, seems to more than irritate some commentators who claim greater knowledge of these things. Equally, some are predicting its demise well before it has even commenced. Rather interestingly, some are also trying to find some fine points in the history of the UAP that mean it is fatally flawed. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Political parties are about people who share a common vision but who do not necessarily all share the same skill set. Policies are what they develop by reaching consensus after extensive informed discussion. They then entrust their executive to enable that to occur via their link to their elected representatives. These elected representatives are not like barristers, who are like guns for hire. In contrast, elected representatives should be party members who share the common vision but whose job it is to enable those policies to formulate public policy and legislate change, for that is what governments do. It must not happen the other way around, that is, a top-down approach as opposed to a bottom-up approach. Political parties that are bottom-up are far more likely to succeed. Those that are top-down and cults, which is what they really are, ultimately fail. The UAP has emerged for these very reasons, embracing a bottom-up approach.

I hope there are many here amongst you who may well join the UAP in the future. I am a fourth generation Queensland politician. My family has worked through all types of parties since its inception and split away from New South Wales in the 1850s. We are very experienced in running parties and, arguably, have far greater knowledge and a skill set than do some of these so-called experts who are predicting negative outcomes. These qualities will lead to success because they are built on the basis

of a long history of what works and what does not work. What does not work is a party that is built around a single person who sets the policies and ignores the wishes of those in the party itself. Secondly, if external parties determine the policies critical for their own personal interests then failure is certain. The UAP is correcting this problem that the CNP—the Campbell Newman party—is facing. We have stated what our policies are and we intend to add further to them. The UAP will adhere to what it says it will do and it is listening to what the majority of Queenslanders and Australians have been pleading for.

The UAP is a party for everyone. It has been set up professionally. It is well funded and it is broadly funded. At the forthcoming federal election it will run candidates in every seat in the House of Representatives and for the Senate—in every state of Australia. It is also preparing for any snap election proposed by the current Queensland state government.

I believe that this party will grow. We welcome anyone who is sick of being stood over, threatened or dictated to or who wants to work collectively in a representative democratic party. This party will focus on bringing people together rather than dividing them. I look forward to a long history as the UAP representative for Gaven.

The reaction in my electorate, on the Gold Coast and across the state has been very encouraging. The party will follow policies developed by stakeholders. It will go back to the members if policies need change and it will not sell the public out, as the Premier is proposing. The UAP has its first parliamentary member, and there will be many more to come.